



Oving Parish Council

Annual Parish Report
Jubilee Hall

Oving

18th May 2017

Oving

Oving Parish Council, Chichester, West Sussex

Oving Parish Council – Chairman’s Annual Report 18th May 2017

Introduction:

This report is a summary of the key activities of the Oving Parish Council (OPC) over the last year. It is available in hard copy or on our Oving Community website. It supplements the reports published in every edition of the Oving Parish News magazine through the year.

Parish Council:

The Interview Panel appointed Ruth Palmer as our new clerk and she started on 1st November 2016. It had been a difficult time prior to that, as the Clerk plays a key role for OPC and is the only paid member.

We have a full complement of 9 Councillors who share the ever-increasing workload. I would like to thank all councillors who have contributed their time and effort to achieve the various activities covered in this report. I’m particularly pleased to report that Paul Guest is gradually recovering from a serious operation and has agreed to stand as a councillor again at the AGM that is held later this evening. At last year’s meeting I announced my intention to stand down today as OPC Chairman. However, as there is nobody prepared to take over this role, I have decided to continue until such time as a replacement can be found. The collapse of OPC would be detrimental and costly for the parish.

The Council Year:

OPC has met 7 times during the year. The minutes of our meetings are available on our Community website. The last 12 months have been particularly busy with large planning applications for residential and business developments in the parish. As a consequence, the Planning Committee has often met monthly in addition to the alternate months scheduled. This involves a lot of work and it is regrettable that the comments and objections we submit are rarely taken into account when considered by the CDC Planning Committee. The population of our parish is likely to treble in the coming years and the traffic will get worse.

*** Oving Youth Club**

This Club is funded largely by OPC and the Woodhorn Group. OPC has again agreed that this Club must be retained as an important amenity in the parish. The Trustees appointed Paula Slater, a qualified Youth Leader who, with Xayva Lawrence and other volunteers, have continued to run it. I’m pleased to report that the numbers attending have made it viable. If you have children and their friends who would like to come, please encourage them to attend on a Wednesday evening in the Village Hall.

*** Recreation Ground and Cycle Track**

OPC is responsible for these popular facilities and ensuring that they are maintained, safe and that third party liability insurance is in place. Mowing and strimming is carried out by a contractor, paid for by OPC and the mandatory annual inspection of this community facility has recently been completed. Improvements will be made as a consequence of the numerous responses received to the Parish Plan questionnaire.

*** Amenity Improvements**

For the last couple of years, OPC has specifically included in its budget, funds to support community projects and improve amenities or infrastructure anywhere in the parish. I'm particularly pleased to report that the "flashing" VAS (vehicle activated speed) sign was finally installed at the beginning of March 2017 after more than 2 years of negotiations with West Sussex Highways. Speeding along the High Street in Oving has been a problem for decades, so hopefully we will notice a decrease from now on.

***Oving Parish Plan:**

Following last year's annual meeting, it was agreed that we prepare a Parish Plan to follow on from the previous one done in 2004. Stephen Quigley volunteered to be the Chairman of a Steering Group formed by OPC to do this. It was recognised that there will be massive changes within the parish over the next 10 years and that additional infrastructure and amenities will be required to meet the needs of the growth in the population.

The responses from those residents who completed the questionnaire in the middle of 2016 have now been analysed in detail by Chichester District Council and the Steering Group. A list of actions has been compiled and we now need your input as part of the agreed consultation process. For those who did not complete or return the questionnaire, this is your chance to add to the action list or to help prioritise those that have been included to date. Once the final list of actions has been compiled and prioritised, these will then need to be agreed by OPC as it will have the responsibility for implementing them over the next 10 years. We will need the help from interested volunteers to make it all happen. It will be an integral part of your future, so please do step forward!

***Superfast Broadband to Oving**

Thanks to the persistence and diligence of Councillor Andrew Wilkinson with the "Oving fibre enabled broad band project", I'm particularly pleased to report that this was achieved on-time by the end of 2016. Connections are already showing huge improvements as you have heard from the brief presentation this evening. Actions are included in the Parish Plan to make similar facilities available in Shopwhyke, Drayton, Merston, Green Lane and Colworth.

*** Community Wardens and Police**

Dawn White and Gareth Jones continue to provide an excellent service to our parish and to the Tangmere parish with whom we share their time. Their contribution to the safety and well being of the parish is much appreciated. Unfortunately, we have lost our designated Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Richard Moorey in the recent staff cuts. He did retain his job and is now one of the 27 PCSOs for this district. If you require help please dial the 101 number or the 999 emergency number if there is a crime in progress.

*** Community Watch**

Although the Oving Parish Community Watch Scheme is not an OPC initiative, we are very grateful to Councillor Liz Smith and her team of helpers for the excellent work that they continue to do in the parish to provide assistance and mobility to our needy residents. Monthly Tea Parties in the Village Hall have been a great success over the 2 years since they started. Many thanks to our Community Wardens and band of willing volunteers who make these popular events happen.

*** Oving Parish News & Website**

Again, although not an OPC initiative, OPN continues to be published three times a year and delivered free to every household in the parish. The quality of this publication improves with every issue. We thank Ron Migliorini, who stepped down as the Editor after the Spring edition in March 2017, for all his hard work over many years. We wish Colin Buchanan every success in his role as the new Editor.

We are very fortunate that James Sealy has now agreed to take on the role as our Webmaster and thank Sophie Martins for soldiering on for such a long time until a replacement volunteered. The Oving Community Website should be used as a regular source of information between receipt of the OPN issues.

*** Leave Oving Traffic Lights Alone (LOLA) & A27 Improvements**

The Planning Application to retain the Oving Traffic lights as they currently operate was resubmitted as planned. It was considered by the CDC Planning Committee at its meeting on 14th September 2016 who voted against its recommended refusal by 10 in favour and only 2 against. This was our first major victory in the 5 year campaign. Our application had to be referred to the Secretary of State for Transport for arbitration. His decision to “defer it indefinitely” was later changed to “indefinite non-approval”. It was considered by the CDC Planning Committee at its meeting on 11th January 2017 and unable to permit our application, they showed their support again by agreeing to “defer it for a period of 12 months or until there is a preferred A27 route announcement regarding the A27 by the Department of Transport, whichever is earlier”. Another victory, that means that we have 12 months to decide what we do next. Funding not used in 2016 will be available this year if we need it to hire professional help from a traffic and transport consultant to argue our case to keep the Oving Traffic Lights open and improve the flow of traffic on the Bypass for the benefit of all local residents.

As many of you will have read in the Observer newspaper, there has been a great deal of controversy with the various Options to Improve the A27. Agreed funding for these improvements has now been cancelled by the Secretary of State for Transport. In my view, this effectively means that we are now more likely to be able to retain the Oving Traffic Lights as reliable way to/from the city to avoid the inevitable increase in congestion on the Chichester Bypass.

Sjoerd Schuyleman

Chairman, Oving Parish Council, 2nd May 2017